

REMARKS

The Title has been amended above as requested by the examiner.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Nogawa et al. (US 6,726,497). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

The present application is a national stage application of International Application No. PCT/JP2003/014002 which claims priority back to Japanese patent application No. 2002-320024 filed on November 1, 2002. The examiner has acknowledged the priority claim and the receipt of the certified copy of the priority document in the Office Action Summary page of the last office action. Enclosed is a verified English language translation of the priority document; Japanese patent application No. 2002-320024 filed on November 1, 2002.

The examiner's attention is directed to MPEP §§ 201.15 and 201.14. Nogawa et al. (US 6,726,497) was filed in the U.S. on November 6, 2002. This is after the foreign priority date of the present application; November 1, 2002. Therefore, Nogawa et al. (US 6,726,497) is not prior art. The examiner is requested to withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based upon Nogawa et al. (US 6,726,497).

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain,

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the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail on the date shown below in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner For Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

6/15/2006 Clair F. Mass
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